

more than 100,000 retired miners and their families to protect their health benefits and their peace of mind. It is not a matter of partisanship. This act was signed into law by President Bush and is supported to this day by the major coal companies.

Yesterday, you heard the author of that act, Senator Jay Rockefeller, explain how it is threatened and how it must be maintained. Today, let me tell you, we're going to fight to preserve your health benefits as guaranteed in the coal act.

Let me close by saying that I understand what's at stake as we fight to protect the health and safety of coal miners. When I was a young lawyer in Arkansas, just out of law school, back in the early 1970's, I handled several black lung cases for retired coal miners who could breathe only with great difficulty after a lifetime in the mines.

Some of the folks from MSHA found a letter that was found on the body of a coal miner who died in a mine explosion in Tennessee. Although a barricade held out the bad air for over 7 hours, the trapped miners eventually succumbed to the suffocating gas. Here is what the miner, Jacob Vowell, wrote to his wife, Ellen:

"Ellen, darling, goodbye for us both. We're all praying for air to support us, but it's getting bad without any air.

"Ellen, I want you to live right and come to heaven. Raise the children as best you can. Oh, how I wish to be with you. It's 25 minutes

after 2. There are a few of us alive yet. Oh, God, for one more breath. Ellen, remember me for as long as you live.

"Goodbye, darling."

That letter was written 93 years ago. Today, thanks to the United Mine Workers, a better America, and the grace of God, our miners are working in greater safety and living with greater dignity.

The future of our Nation depends upon rewarding the efforts of people like you with safety, prosperity, and dignity. You and your families and the millions and millions of working families like you, you are heart and soul of the American dream. We have to keep working together not just to preserve what's been won but to continue to fight for better jobs, better wages, and more justice.

The 21st century can be America's greatest time. Our children and our grandchildren can enjoy more freedom, more opportunity if we do what is right. But we can't let the people in Washington who are trying to do it, turn back the clock. We have to keep America moving forward, strong, proud, and united, in the words of your own banner. Let's stay that way and march into the 21st century victorious for the values of ordinary Americans.

God bless you, and thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 2:15 p.m. from Room 459 in the Old Executive Office Building to the United Mine Workers convention in Miami, FL.

Remarks at the Swearing-In of Mark Gearan as Director of the Peace Corps

September 26, 1995

Well, Mark, congratulations to you and your family, to all the Members of Congress who are here and other former Peace Corps volunteers and others.

I have always been impressed by many things about the Peace Corps, one of which is the contributions made by Peace Corps volunteers after they come home. Senator Dodd was a member of the Peace Corps. Congressman Farr was a member of the Peace Corps. Donna Shalala served in the Peace Corps. The Vice

President's beloved sister, Nancy Gore Hunger, was one of the first two people to join the Peace Corps, working with Sarge Shriver, all those years ago.

And it is a remarkable tradition that emphasizes that our country is about more than power and wealth. It is also about the power of our values and the power of a helping hand and the ethic of service and the understanding that we have an obligation not only to our own people but to people around the world to help

them make the most of their own lives, and that the best guarantee of peace and freedom and democracy is the ability of people freely to develop their God-given capacities to strengthen their families and see their communities succeed. That's really what the Peace Corps is all about.

It is the symbol of everything that got my generation into public service. And it has animated a whole generation of people. It is the inspiration for so much of the service that goes on today, whether it is in the AmeriCorps program that was started in our administration or—I just came from taping a public service announcement for Nickelodeon, the children's television network. One year ago this week, I asked the children in Nickelodeon to volunteer to do community service. And 5 million-plus of them did so by telephone. They called in and actually served. And so this year, we're trying to increase. These are grade-school children by and large.

So this whole ethic of service that has spread across our country in part is inspired by and defined by the work that was begun so many years ago by President Kennedy and by Sargent Shriver. I think it's really fitting that Mark Gearan should be here in this program inspired by President Kennedy. I mean, look around at this family and notice that Father Leo O'Donovan—operative word, O'Donovan—the

president of Georgetown, is here. Notice—I was wondering how Mark got so much bipartisan support. Look at the chairman of the committee, Chairman Callahan—[*Laughter*—and Peter King—King, in this case, is a very Irish name. [*Laughter*] As a matter of fact, Mark said, “Mr. President, I love the Peace Corps just the way it is. I only have one serious change I want to make. I think we should send 6,500 of the 7,000 volunteers to Ireland.” [*Laughter*]

Congressman Moran, we're glad you're here. And Congresswoman Pelosi, we're certainly glad you're here to show that we're not trying to ethnically purify the Peace Corps here. [*Laughter*]

The Peace Corps is really the reflection of our better selves, isn't it? And one of the reasons we're all so happy to see Mark Gearan become the Director of it is that, on most days, he is the reflection of our better selves. We wish him well. We love him, we respect him, and we know that he will do great honor to this very important position for the United States and for all the good-hearted people of the entire world.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3:20 p.m. in the Indian Treaty Room of the Old Executive Office Building.

Remarks on the Peace Process in Bosnia and an Exchange With Reporters September 26, 1995

The President. Good afternoon. I have just spoken with Secretary Christopher and the rest of our negotiating team in New York, and I am pleased to announce another positive step on the path to peace in Bosnia. The Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia have endorsed a set of further agreed basic principles for an overall settlement to the war, building on the agreement they reached in Geneva on September 8th.

These principles spell out in greater detail the constitutional structures of the state of Bosnia, including the establishment of a national Presidency, a Parliament, and a constitutional court. They commit the parties to hold free

and democratic elections under international supervision. And they further provide that a central government will be responsible for conducting Bosnia's foreign policy as well as other key functions that are still being discussed.

The American people must realize that there are many difficult obstacles still to overcome along the path to peace. There is no guarantee of success. But today's agreement moves us closer to the ultimate goal of a genuine peace, and it makes clear that Bosnia will remain a single internationally recognized state. America will strongly oppose the partition of Bosnia, and America will continue working for peace.